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REGISTER NOW FOR SPECIAL-NEEDS SHELTERS

September is Florida Preparedness Month

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Hurricane season may begin on June 1, but it's by no means too late to prepare for storms. In fact, it's in September that we enter the most active part of the Atlantic Hurricane Season which doesn't end until Nov. 30.

September is **Florida Preparedness Month** for that reason. The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) reminds residents who are oxygen-dependent or have minimal medical needs to register for space in a special-needs shelter so they're ready when a storm is approaching.

"It's critically important for Pinellas residents to be aware of, and to plan for disasters, whether natural or man-made," said Dr. Ulyee Choe, DOH-Pinellas' director. "Our staff trains and prepares to staff the three special-needs shelters in our county to serve the needs of medically vulnerable residents who need to use these locations during an emergency."

The special-needs shelters are in north, mid- and south Pinellas at these schools:

- **Dunedin Highland Middle School**, 70 Patricia Ave., Dunedin
- **Oak Grove Middle School**, 1370 S. Belcher Rd., Clearwater
- **John Hopkins Middle School**, 701 16th St. S., St. Petersburg

Special-needs shelters are not for residents with complex medical needs. DOH-Pinellas staffs them, but they are designed to provide minimal care for those who need power for their medical equipment and those that need some assistance but live independently.

For a complete list of all shelters in Pinellas, including those that accept pets, go to Pinellas County Emergency Management's preparedness page here: <http://pinellascounty.org/emergency/specialneeds.htm#specialshelters> where you can also find the special-needs registration form. For information or to preregister by phone, call Emergency Management, (727) 464-3800.

For information about DOH-Pinellas, go to www.PinellasHealth.com or call (727) 824-6900. Follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Nextdoor for the latest agency updates.

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